

Seattle's Million Flower Compost Helps Restore New York Community Garden

By Jon Rowley, Million Flower Composter and former Interbay P-Patch Site Coordinator

In the year since September 11, 2001, we've become familiar with the wreckage left then cleared at the site of the World Trade Center collapse. However, surrounding blocks and buildings also suffered extensive damage. Those who lived and worked nearby have spent the year assessing and rebuilding.

"After the collapse of the World Trade Center towers, the Liberty Community Garden, located only 1 1/2 blocks away, was covered with a foot of dust, airplane parts, personal papers, and lots of shoes," explained Tessa Huxley, executive director of the Battery Park City Parks Conservancy. "The garden was subsequently obliterated by rescue and cleanup trucks. One part of the garden was used to stack crushed cars. The pile was six stories high."

When the cleaned up and replanted garden celebrated its restoration with a Rededication Ceremony on September 28, 2002, a delegation from Seattle was there to present a cubic yard of the Million Flower Compost as a metaphor of renewal and gesture of solidarity and compassion. Seattle P-Patchers can't imagine what the Liberty gardeners went through, but they can make compost.

Hundreds of volunteers helped compost the flowers 75,000 people brought to the Seattle Center Flower Vigil following 9/11. As Site Coordinator at the Interbay P-Patch when the composting was done, I remember the huge task of composting 80 cubic yards of flowers by hand. It gave us something to do and a connection with the future at a time when we were feeling hopeless and emotionally drained. On the day of the composting, Interbay gardener, Stephanie Marquis suggested sending part of the Million Flower Compost to the community garden closest to the World Trade Center in New York. From Ellen Kirby, President of the American Community Gardening Association (ACGA), we learned that was the Liberty Community Garden, only one and a half blocks away.



City Councilmember Conlin moving Million Flower Compost in NYC

John van Amerongen

The Liberty gardeners were not only receptive to receiving the gift of the Million Flower compost, they made its presentation the main event of the garden's rededication celebration. There was just one big hurdle to overcome: getting 1,400 pounds of compost from Seattle to New York. Yet just as strangers came to each other's aid on 9/11, supporters rallied to help arrange the compost transportation one year later. Volunteers packed the compost into 32 oyster boxes and loaded it into a large container. Taylor Shellfish Farms donated the airfreight to JFK airport in New

(Continued on next page...)

(*Million Flower Compost, continued from previous page.*)

York. UPS volunteered to transport the shipment from JFK to Battery Park City.

The Seattle delegation, clad in green Seattle P-Patch T-shirts, included City Councilmembers Richard Conlin and Judy Nicastro; poet and Greenwood P-Patcher Ann Hursey; singer/songwriter John Van Amerongen; Good Shepard P-Patcher Greg Shigenaka and his seven-year-old son Mason, and Interbay P-Patchers Jon Rowley and Kate McDermott. Ann Hursey recited her poem "Composting Peace," written on the day of the composting. Van Amerongen performed his song "Message from New York," and Mason Shigenaka presented a scroll of poems to the garden written by students at the John Stanford International School.

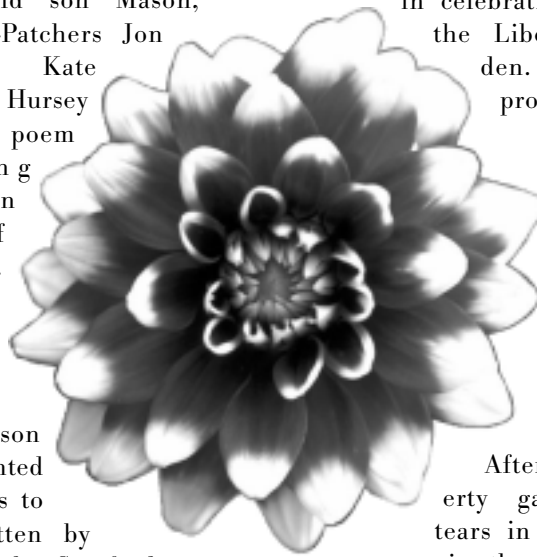
"The fifth-graders did the poems and my principal arranged this all to give to New York, to the Liberty Garden to put on," Mason explained to the assembled gardeners and community leaders. Seattle P-Patch T-shirts were in high demand and fortunately there were a few dozen to share.

"Seattle has one of the strongest community gardening programs in the country," said ACCA President Ellen Kirby. "The American Community Gardening Association is pleased to be a participant in this inspiring exchange. The sharing of compost and resources strengthens the link between gardeners across

the US."

Councilmember Conlin echoed those sentiments as he presented the compost: "The City of Seattle recognizes the value of community gardens and open green spaces to the vigor and health of our neighborhoods and urban environments. It is an honor to present on behalf of the City of Seattle and the Seattle P-Patch community our Million Flower Compost, and join with New Yorkers

in celebrating the restoration of the Liberty Community Garden. We are enormously proud of the hundreds of volunteers who made this compost happen. The plants and community growing here are a beacon of recovery and renewal from the losses we have all experienced."



After the ceremony, Liberty gardeners, some with tears in their eyes, rushed to mix the Million Flower Com-

post into the their garden's soil. Participants attending from other gardens joined them, including some who had lost friends or relatives on 9/11. They reverentially packed small, symbolic baggies of the Million Flower humus for their gardens.

"We are thrilled to have our hands in the dirt again," said Liberty gardener Mike McCormick. "We were devastated by the destruction of our garden and thought it was gone forever."

"The Liberty gardeners are really touched by what you all have done," added Huxley, "We find ourselves getting choked up when we think about it!"

The Seattle Department of Neighborhoods sponsors the P-Patch community gardening program, comprising nearly 70 gardens serving approximately 4,000 active gardeners. ☀

MILLION FLOWER COMPOST AVAILABLE TO COMMUNITY GROUPS

Interbay P-Patch gardeners, stewards of the Million Flower Compost from the Seattle Center International Fountain memorial to those lost on 9/11, have an offer for community gardens, organizations, companies, and groups throughout Puget Sound. On Saturday, November 16, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Interbay P-Patch gardeners will distribute the remaining two cubic yards of Million Flower Compost to groups who wish to take a bucket for their own gardens as a symbolic act of sharing in this important event.

The compost will be available on a first-come, first-serve basis. Please bring your own bucket. Interbay P-Patch gardeners also asks recipients to send a picture of their garden next year for a photo montage they plan to assemble. Contact Yen Chin at yenchin@igc.org or (206) 282-5948 for details. ☀

Mayor Congratulates Community Gardens at P-Patch Harvest Banquet

Gardeners representing approximately 30 P-Patch gardens from all over the city gathered in September for the Annual P-Patch Harvest Banquet. A host of pot-luck dishes, many from the garden and some from the P-Patch cookbook, kept the 130 gardeners munching happily through the two-hour event.

Attendees included Department of Neighborhoods Director Yvonne Sanchez, Brent Crook, director of Neighborhoods' Community Building Division, which includes P-Patch, and Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels and his wife Sharon Nickels.

Gardeners applauded and hugged the Mayor as he presented a certificate of appreciation to representatives of each P-Patch community garden. The certificates thanked P-Patch gardeners for making Seattle a more liveable city. Guests were also treated to a slideshow featuring P-Patch plots of varying stripes: shadiest, most homey, prettiest, and best organized. Winners received applause, laughter, and prizes secured from local garden stores.

"This is one of the highlights of the gardening season for P-Patch and Neighborhoods staff," said Crook. "It's not an elaborate event, but it's a chance to celebrate all the things P-Patch does best: building community, bringing different cultures together, and of course sharing quality, homegrown produce!"

P-Patch gardeners prepared a host of displays to represent their gardens. Picardo P-Patch even prepared a brochure on its hoped-for composting toilet or "earth closet." Culminating the program, the Mayor drew raffle tickets to select the winners of a handmade P-Patch quilt and 10 pillows, all with garden-themed squares

beautifully knitted by P-Patch gardeners. The \$7,000 in raffle proceeds went to the Friends of P-Patch and its programs to benefit community gardening. The evening ended



with dessert and the wonderful sounds of the local blue grass group, Lost in the Fog.

"It was one of the best events I've attended this year," said Sanchez. "I was struck by the warmth, spirit, and diversity of everyone there. One of the gardeners hugged me in greeting and even though we didn't speak each other's language, we communicated and understood that we were surrounded by friends who shared a common passion. It was wonderful!"

For more information on the P-Patch program, contact Rich MacDonald at (206) 386-0088 or send email to rich.macdonald@seattle.gov ❀

Cultivating Communities Youth Garden Project Update

By Brooke Sullivan, AmeriCorps Volunteer with the Youth Program of Cultivating Communities

The summer was a very exciting time for the Cultivating Communities youth gardens, as it can be for many gardens! All three Cultivating Communities/Seattle Housing Authority youth gardens, managed by Anza Muenchow, have taken on an identity of their own. The gardens serve a diverse crowd of students, ages 5 to 17, mostly African American, Southeast



Anza Muenchow and eager youth P-Patchers

Asian, and East African. Gardening was a wildly popular activity for youth this year and the enthusiasm has not waned since the new school year began. Over the summer we grew vegetables that the kids chose, including popcorn, tomatoes, parsley, kohlrabi, sunflowers, zucchini, pumpkins, strawberries, rosemary, sage, and many more! The kids are learning to recognize veg-

etables in many stages of development and are now reaping the benefits of their work in the harvest.

July 27, 2002 marked the official opening of the High Point Youth Garden. The kids worked very hard to get it ready: building the beds, moving compost, building the fence, starting vegetables, and watering each new life. They even prepared the invitations and subsequent thank you notes for the attendees. We were happy to host Seattle Housing Authority Director Harry Thomas, and Department of Neighborhoods Director Yvonne Sanchez. Frank Kirk of Friends of P-Patch also at-

tended. We enjoyed wonderful food, handed out certificates of appreciation, and finally, cut the ribbon across the front gate! It was all very exciting.

Rainier Vista youth garden was our most popular site this summer. Due to the success of the site's art program, we were able to tap into an abundant stream of children who came regularly to the garden and took an active role in all of the work involved, including the worm bin we started, which the children maintained. We also managed to keep the compost pile overflowing all season with our leftover watermelon rinds, weeds, and vegetable waste.

At New Holly, we had a consistent group of kids who came to help out, eat snacks, read books about the garden, and of course, water the beds. The youth from NewHolly love to water! Here we were able to secure and work a total of five plots, filling them with a variety of vegetables. So far, peas and corn have been the children's favorites.

All the summer work is paying off as the harvest begins. The children are happy to take home lunch sacks filled with the vegetables and flowers they have nurtured and grown all summer. Nothing is slowing down yet. As the beautiful blue sky turns to rain again, we will likely move indoors, learning recipes and cooking methods to keep us full for the winter. We will continue to enjoy our work and our world, waiting for the wakeup call of spring's first thunder. ☀

Ask the Expert: Fall Lawn Tips

Experts say fall is the best time to fertilize your lawn and garden plants to strengthen roots for the cold months ahead.

"The goal is to strengthen your lawn now so that it is prepared to make it through the stress of winter," says Gwen Stahnke, cooperative extension turfgrass specialist for Washington State University in Puyallup. "You also reduce the need to go after pests later."

ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL

With a bountiful harvest underway, many backyard gardeners feel as confident giving advice as they do extra zucchini. However Stahnke cautions against accepting every piece of gardening and lawn advice you receive as gospel.

"What works for lawns in one neighborhood may not work for a lawn on another block," Stahnke says. "For instance, you often hear 'mow high and often in the winter.' But many older lawns in Seattle are bentgrass and that strategy can cause thatch buildup on those lawns. When the temperatures drop and lawn growth slows, your best bet is to mow when necessary and at the appropriate height for the grass type in your lawn, depending upon the time of year."

Not sure what's growing in your front yard? Stahnke suggests checking with your local WSU Extension office or a knowledgeable garden center in your community. You might even need to get a soil test

to determine what's best. Appropriate use of fertilizers and other products can help you create a healthy garden that's better able to weather the weather and pests without added chemicals.

Even if a product is organic, gardeners must still follow directions and use according to conditions in their area.

"You can leach organic products if they are applied when it's cool or when there's too much rainfall," says Stahnke. "I don't want homeowners thinking because it's organic that they don't have to be careful." ❀



MORE TIPS

- Create a healthy garden to stop pests and other problems before they start and before you reach for chemical 'fixes'.
- Identify pests before you spray, stomp, or squash: It might be a beneficial insect.
- Give nature a chance to work rather than trying to eliminate pests at the first sign of damage.
- Use the least toxic pest controls available, such as traps or barriers.
- For lawns, water according to soil type, since a sandy soil will require a different schedule than a soil with more silt or clay.



Thanks, Neighbor!

Mark your calendar now for the eighth annual Neighbor Appreciation Day on Saturday, February 8, 2003. From the beginning, Neighbor Appreciation Day has been a genuinely grassroots celebration. People throughout Seattle have organized block parties, open houses, award ceremonies, potluck dinners, and work parties to recognize and encourage caring neighbors and to



2002 1st Place art contest
winner Brianna Valavala

acknowledge their good work and the efforts of others in the community.

Each year, the celebration has been bigger and better, but the day's success depends on you! Sky's the limit! Would your neighbors like to hold a Jello carving contest? Or a talent show? Or a costume parade for kids of all ages? Anything goes on Neighbor Appreciation Day, as long as you and your neighbors have fun and get to know each other better.

For more information about Neighbor Appreciation Day, call Natasha Jones at (206) 615-0950, send e-mail to natasha.jones@seattle.gov, or go to www.cityofseattle.net/don/apday/ on the Web.

Already got an event in mind? Call or email us! The Department of Neighborhoods would like to include your event in a calendar for this special day. ❀

New System Improves Service, Response Time for Citizens

The next time you call the City's Citizens Service Bureau (CSB), you might notice even better service than usual. CSB and the Mayor's Office are preparing to launch an all-new Citizens Response Management system (CRM) to better track citywide complaints, service and information requests, as well as public opinions on current issues.

"The CRM system is a valuable tool that will capture what is going on in the whole city, allow quicker response to problem areas, and help us provide proactive responses," explained Citizens Service Bureau Manager Michelle White. "It will also give the Mayor and his Cabinet an accurate reading of the who, what, and where of each problem and concern in the City, and help us forecast emerging issues by tracking call volume and topics."

The CRM system is replacing an 11-year-old recordkeeping system in the Customer Service Bureau that has no reporting capability and has been in danger of crashing for several years due to data overload and the age of the database.

As part of the system switch, the Citizens Service Bureau and Mayor's Office will discontinue the email address city.action@seattle.gov. Residents will be redirected to a new online form for all communication. The form will integrate information into the new CRM system. The Citizens Service Bureau will continue to take phone calls at 206-684-CITY and greet customers who visit the office in-person in City Hall at 600 4th Avenue, room 105. CSB also has a TTY line for the deaf and hard of hearing, 206-615-0476.

White says she realizes that not every resident who emails will welcome the change. However, she believes service improvement will eventually win over any critics. "We have to get a handle on the huge amount of email that we receive," White says. "This is a way to track and respond to resident concerns more efficiently and effectively. Our staff is excited that we'll be better able to help each person who calls."

The new system is scheduled to go live November 11. ❁

2003 Neighborhood Matching Fund Application Deadlines

SMALL AND SIMPLE PROJECTS FUND

This fund accepts applications six times each year for projects that request up to \$10,000 and that can be completed within six months.

2003 application deadlines: January 27, March 17, May 19, July 21, September 15, November 17

LARGE PROJECTS FUND

This fund is for projects that request more than \$10,000 and can be completed within a 12-month timeframe. Requests to the Large Projects Fund are made using a two-step application process: submittal of a Letter of Intent to Apply, followed by the Large Projects Fund application about two months later. ❁

LARGE PROJECTS FUND 2003 deadlines:

January 27, July 21

Clean Seattle Initiative Picks Up Steam—And Trash

It's not often people spend part of their weekend cleaning up their community. But that's just what happens every month in neighborhoods around Seattle as part of Mayor Greg Nickels' Clean Seattle Initiative.

Since taking office, Mayor Nickels has used monthly Clean Seattle events in several neighborhoods to emphasize cleanup and beautification of the city and the benefits of a clean and secure community. The effort is a partnership between the City, business volunteers, civic organizations, and citizen volunteers.

The Clean Seattle Initiative has helped to transform several neighborhoods in just a few hours by focusing on cleanup efforts that immediately improve the neighborhood. City crews do the heavy lifting and more labor-intensive work on Friday, and volunteers wrap up on Saturday.

Past cleanups have included picking up litter and leaves, clearing illegal dumping sites and overgrown brush, towing abandoned cars, freshening park facilities, and removing graffiti from public structures. Cleanup efforts are tailored to the needs of each neighborhood, which have included Othello Park, Judkins Park, South Delridge, Golden Gardens, Downtown, Cascade, Greenwood/Phinney, and the Courtland/Genesee neighborhood.

Partners in Clean Seattle are Department of Neighborhoods, Seattle Arts Commission, Seattle City Light, Seattle Parks and Recreation, Seattle Police Department, Seattle Public Utilities, Seattle Department of Transportation, and the Department of Design, Construction and Land Use.



Clean Seattle Initiative in Greenwood/Phinney on September 21

The final Clean Seattle Initiative events of the year are listed below. For more information or to volunteer, contact Natasha Jones, Department of Neighborhoods, at (206) 615-0950 or natasha.jones@seattle.gov ❁

Upcoming Clean Seattle Initiative events

DATE	LOCATION	SECTOR	STEWARD
November 22, 23	Downtown Business Core	Central	Gary Johnson
December 13, 14	Ravenna/University District	North	Karen Ko

NUSA Community Building Conference: If We'd Only Known

By Allynn Ruth and Thomas Whittemore

The Small Sparks Program is built on the idea that no matter where people live in the city they have the following things in common:

- A personal pleasure they can share with others
- A desire to build community by connecting with one another.
- An ability to develop something really creative.

Neighborhoods staff believe that:

- Neighbors can help neighbors make projects happen.
- A little money never hurts.
- The less paperwork the better.

Small Sparks is the intersection of these ideas and the small program has been drawing big interest from communities around the country. Late last year, organizers for the 2002 Neighborhoods USA (NUSA) Conference in Houston, Texas asked the Department of Neighborhoods



to make a presentation on the Small Sparks Program. We submitted a proposal for a workshop that we would present along with Lee Harper, a resident who has coached others to accomplish Small Sparks projects: we would train people to replicate the Small Sparks Program in other cities. Our challenge was to squeeze what had been an all-day training session into 90 minutes of activities that would help folks “ignite imagination, create community, and make a difference”.

To be successful, the set-up had to be perfect. We needed space for worktables, break out areas, and room for participants to get involved. We repeatedly asked the organizers how many people to expect.

Their standard reply was, “Don’t worry, these conferences are very low-key. You won’t get

more than 30 people, and maybe less since most people float in and out.” Optimism is practically a requirement in the Small Sparks program, so we prepared for 50. Evidently, our jazzy course description worked. Ten days before the event, we learned that 60 people had already signed up. With two days left to go, we sent workshop materials for 75.

Upon arrival in Houston, our first endeavor was to check out our space. Even for the expected group of 30-50, it was less than adequate: no tables, no easels, and no room to move around, along with instruction from hotel staff that we were not to tape anything to the walls. It was time for Plan B. We negotiated with the hotel staff for basic presentation equipment and spent the night at Kinko’s and Walgreens, making extra copies and trying to restructure our presentation into something that would work in a limited amount of space.

CAREFUL WHAT YOU WISH FOR...

We were scheduled to start at 11a.m. People began arriving at 10:30 a.m. By 10:50, every seat was taken. We had to station someone at the door to turn people away before we risked a fire code violation. Still, people begged to sit on the floor or stand in the corner. In all, 80 people went through Small Sparks training that day, we had to turn away at least 20 more, and another 25 requested materials by mail.

That day we learned that for many cities, Small Sparks is an attainable starting point for their community building efforts. Many don’t have the benefit of more than a decade of grassroots community building experience from which to draw inspiration. Our program was developed more than 10 years ago after the initiation of the Neighborhood Matching Fund. That resource alone puts us in a very unique position: not every city can devote \$4.5 million annually to fund community building efforts. For some cities, even one million dollars is a stretch. But



Small Sparks offers a low-cost alternative: \$25,000 allocated in increments of \$250 that can really make a difference.

We came home from NUSA with a new respect for the “small” way of doing things. As if to drive the point home even further, the Sunday, October 6 edition of the Seattle Times listed several suggestions on how to build community. One of them depicted a woman pulling a wagon full of magazines through her neighborhood while talking with neighbors. That’s actually the description of a Small Sparks project called “Spirit of Community, Walkin’ the Wagon,” implemented by Seattleite Julia Willaford.

SMALL OUTREACH, BIG RESULTS

We like to say that Small Sparks can be used at any time, by anybody. This year we have worked to do more outreach to persons who are Spanish speaking and those of Southeast Asian or East African descent. We are also reaching out to people with physical and developmental disabilities, like the woman featured in a recent Seattle Post-Intelligencer article who has launched a successful greeting cards business. Coincidentally, she is also a member of the Small Sparks family. Lupita Cano used a \$250 grant to complete a project called “WOW Waves” in which she shared her passion for art with kids at a neighborhood park by providing them with materials to create their own art. Who knew that a passion for art would help build community? We didn’t, but we had a small spark of intuition that it might.

For more information on Small Sparks, contact Carolyn Carlson at 206-684-0448, Allynn Ruth at 206-684-0301, or Thomas Whittemore at 206-733-9586. ☼

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City Departments Available to Provide Utility Assistance

The slumping economy, layoffs, and coming cold weather are delivering a triple blow to residents struggling to pay their household bills. Neighborhood Service Center staff have noticed an increase in the number of residents delaying or foregoing payment on their utility bills. The utilities report several thousand customers with delinquent bills of \$1,000 or more. As the weather turns cold, these same families will be receiving shut-off notices.

Davonna Johnson, Manager for the Neighborhood Information and Payment Services Program, is working with City Light and the Human Services Department to find ways to help residents facing this situation. Neighborhood Service Center staff will be referring customers to the Project Share and ELIA (Emergency Low Income Assistance) programs for help, and to the Federal Energy Assistance program. All of the programs have income or other eligibility requirements.

The Mayor's Office for Senior Citizens (MOSC) is also working with older and income-eligible city residents feeling the economic pinch. The MOSC can refer people to Utility Assistance Programs which provide reduced utility discounts to eligible Seattle households. Qualified applicants may receive up to

a 50% discount on their Seattle City Light and Seattle Combined Utility (water, sewer and garbage) bills.

Program Intake Representatives will provide assistance to both walk-in and telephone clients. For renters, if the landlord pays all utilities including the electricity, the benefit could be in the form of a rent voucher. Applicants must meet income, disability, or age requirements to be eligible for assistance through the two Utility Assistance Programs.

Another resource is Project Share, which provides payment assistance to eligible Seattle City Light customers (eligibility guideline is based on 70% of the State median income). The program is made possible by public contributions

and can be accessed by contacting Seattle Public Utilities at 684-3000 for a referral.

The Utility Assistance Programs are located in the MOSC offices in the Alaska Building, 618 Second Avenue, Room 250 at the corner of Second Avenue & Cherry Street. Hours are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.,

Monday through Friday. Customers can reach the Utility Assistance Programs at (206) 684-0268.

There are seven Neighborhood Service Centers across Seattle that accept utility payments. To find the one nearest you, check out our website at <http://www.cityofseattle.net/neighborhoods/nsc> or call (206) 684-CITY. ☀

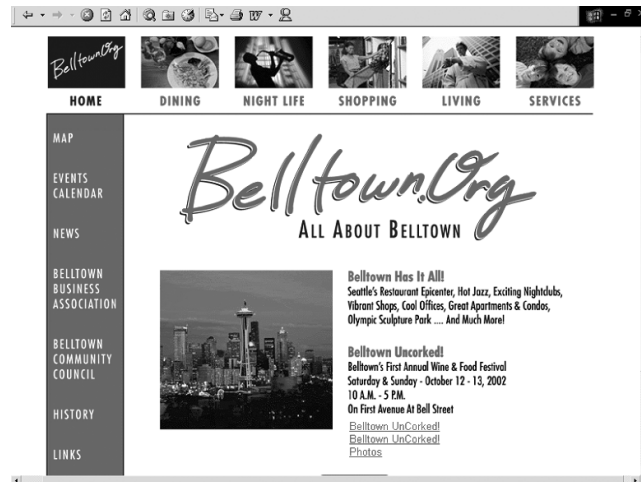


There are seven Neighborhood Service Centers across Seattle that accept utility payments.

Belltown Online

A Belltown marketing committee, in conjunction with the Belltown Business Association, has installed more than 100 banners which denote the Belltown neighborhood and list the neighborhood's new Web site: www.belltown.org. The banners and Web site are part of a larger marketing effort to focus attention on the

neighborhood as a great place to live, work, dine, and shop. The group is sponsoring "Belltown Uncorked," a new event which will feature fine local wines and food from upscale Belltown restaurants. See www.belltown.org for information.



Neighborhood Service Center Acquires E-mail Address

The Queen Anne/Magnolia Neighborhood Service Center has acquired the e-mail address QueenAnneMagnoliaNSC@seattle.gov. The new address will help Center staff better serve resi-

dents of Queen Anne and Magnolia and manage the Center's new electronic newsletter. Neighborhood District Coordinator Ed Pottharst and staff will handle mail sent to that address. ☀

NEW NAME, SAME GREAT SERVICE


The Neighborhood Service Center Coordinators have a new, slightly less wieldy title, with the support of the Mayor and City Council. They have recently received a job reclassification and the title of Neighborhood District Coordinator (NDC). The change reflects expanded responsibilities that have taken effect over the past two years. Congratulations, Coordinators! ☀



Dozens of residents and City representatives turned out October 2 for a celebration at Flo Ware Park in the Central Area. The park received \$250,000 from the Pro Parks Opportunity Fund, \$107,800 from the Neighborhood Matching Fund, plus a \$10,000 Starbucks

Neighborhood Park grant for major renovations. The park is one of 19 projects that will receive funding through the first cycle of the Pro Parks Levy Opportunity Fund.

For more information about the Opportunity Fund, contact Catherine Anstett, Seattle Parks and Recreation at (206) 615-0386, or see www.cityofseattle.net/parks/proparks/opportunityfund.htm on the internet.

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